

TITLE: DON'T YOU KNOW? (THE CORINTHIANS' FAILURES IN JUDGMENT)

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 6

INTRO: **Flow of the text:** **5:1-8**—Put away the fornicating brother! **5:9-13**—General instruction on proper judgment and disfellowshipping of sinful brethren. **6:1-8**—Their failure to judge even the small matters (taking brethren to court)! This is another *specific* issue, but still within the larger topic of judging. **6:9-11**—The discussion returns to brethren who are still living in sin – they won't be saved! **6:12-20** – Our purpose in life: not to continue sinning, but to glorify God! ***All** of these things the Corinthian brethren should've known (**Six times** he says "don't you know?")! These failures were inexcusable!

I. FAILURE IN JUDGING SIMPLE MATTERS (v. 1-8):

(v. 1) *Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous and not the saints?* The answer is Yes (v. 6)! And by his tone we can already tell that this is wrong!

(v. 2-3) Here he shows that we're responsible for judging much greater matters than these simple issues between brethren!

- (v. 2) *Don't you know that the saints will judge the world?* How? God has given His Word to the world. Those who obey will be saved; those who don't will be lost (i.e., the world will judge – **Jn 12:48**). And this word is sent into the world by means of Christians (**Mt 28:18-20; 2 Cor 4:7**). We judge the world (who is lost, who needs the gospel, etc.) by the Word. *If you shall judge the world, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?* With the world, we're judging matters pertaining to being saved or lost. The simpler matters being referenced in the church are non-religious (non-salvational) matters – otherwise, how could the public courts judge this?

- (v. 3) *Don't you know that we will judge angels? How much more the things that pertain to **this** life?* Who are these angels? Probably the fallen angels (**2 Pet 2:4**—“reserved unto judgment”). We're not told how we will judge angels? But it can be no other way than the same way we judge the world – by the Word of the Judge (**Jn 12:48**). This is all we have. The point is that, if we can judge great spiritual matters by the Word of God, then why can't we judge these little differences between brethren?

(v. 4) *If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life* – continued from v. 3 – if **you** (the church) have *these* issues to address, which are much easier than the spiritual issues involved in your judging of the world and angels.... Next he either makes a command or asks a question (the Greek is ambiguous). **1) Set them to judge who are least esteemed** (utterly despised) *in the church*. If this is the meaning, then it is sarcasm, and meant to shame them (v. 5). **2) Do you set them to judge who are least esteemed** (their judgment is despised) *in the church?* This refers to non-Christian judges/courts (least esteemed **by** the church), and is probably the intended meaning, since there shouldn't be anyone in the church described in this way (“utterly despised”).

**If you can make these simple judgments (as well as much more difficult ones), are you really letting non-Christians judge you???

(v. 5) *I say this for your shame!* You should be ashamed!! *Isn't there a wise man among you* (someone who can be a judge)?

(v. 6) Apparently not, since *brother goes to law with brother*. This is bad enough, since **Mt 18:15-18** teaches us how to resolve problems between brethren. But what makes it worse is that it's happening *before unbelievers!* It's bad enough that you **1)** have these disputes among yourselves, and **2)** that you can't resolve them yourselves. But **3)** you're so immature as to parade your petty problems before the public! How does this make the church look to the community?

(v. 7-8) Think about the consequences of your actions, & instead just *take wrong, let yourself be defrauded* (kept back, robbed)! (v.8) *But you do wrong & defraud, even your own brethren!* How many are willing to be defrauded? If a brother has something of yours and won't return it, **1)** exhaust your efforts with him in love, then **2)** take witnesses, **3)** let the church judge, **4)** forget about it. But **do not** pursue it legally outside the church! The church and its reputation ought to be worth much more than whatever it is you've lost!

II. FAILURE IN JUDGING THE WEIGHTIER MATTERS (v. 9-20):

A. The Consequences of Sin (v. 9-11)

1. (v. 9-10) *Don't you know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?* This seems to be a return to the topic of brethren who continue sinning (e.g., the fornicating brother in **ch. 5**).

- Kingdom = church, but can also be Heaven, which is clearly the case here, since he's seems to still be talking about members of the church (from the ch.5 topic). Though Christians, they won't *inherit* the kingdom; they won't be saved!
- Do not be deceived* (don't fool yourselves – as with your acceptance of the fornicating brother in ch. 5): *neither fornicators* (all illicit sexual activity), *nor idolaters* (worshipping anything but God), *nor adulterers, nor effeminate* (“soft,” homosexual – general term for men not acting like men), *nor abusers of themselves with mankind* (sodomite, homosexual).... Our society is trying so hard to accept homosexuality, that many have tried to say that the Bible does not condemn it! However, it is condemned twice in this verse, even condemning men who act like women!

c. (v. 10) *Nor thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers* (abusive, railer), *extortioners* (greedy, robbers). None of these people will go to Heaven! What a politically incorrect statement! The Bible speaks the **truth**, not political correctness!

2. (v. 11) There's still hope! You changed, and so can they!

- Such were some of you*. Some of the Corinthians were guilty of some of these sins in the past. *But you are washed* (baptized, obedient), *sanctified* (set apart by obeying the gospel), *justified* (declared innocent) *in the name of Jesus* (by his authority). The past doesn't dictate the present. You **can** change.

b. But this is supposed to be a **complete** change – of attitude, lifestyle, direction, and purpose in life!

B. The Purpose of Your Body (v. 12-20)

1. The body is the Lord's (v. 12-14)

(v. 12) *All things are lawful unto me* – this seems to have been a Corinthian saying, similar to something a boss of mine used to say – “everything in moderation.” This is true, but only in reference to things God has authorized! It is this category (not to “all things”) Paul addresses his next comments.

a. *But all things are not expedient* (beneficial, profitable). Paul is obviously not admitting that they were correct in saying that all things are lawful. He's already provided lists of things that aren't (v. 9-10; 5:11). It may be that he's admitting that everything God created is good, as long as it's not abused. The ingredients of drugs and alcohol aren't inherently bad, but man has altered God's creations to make things that are harmful and evil. But even among those things that are okay, sometimes they aren't necessarily beneficial.

b. *But I will not be brought under the power of any.* Again, many things are okay, even beneficial, but become bad when we let them control us (2 Pet 2:19). Food is obviously one of those things (v. 13)!

(v. 13a) *Meats for the belly and the belly for meats* (eat to live or live to eat)? Either way, both the belly & food will be destroyed (our physical bodies are temporal and will be destroyed – ch. 15). Even so, while we have this temporary tabernacle (2 Pet 1:13), it's to be used to glorify God (v. 20).

(v. 13b-14) *The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.*

a. Back to the original topic (from ch. 5). They obviously had a big problem with this (boasting about it – 5:2,6). Corinth was known for its *religious* fornication (temple of Aphrodite –1000 prostitute priestesses). It's easy for cultural views to find their way into the church (considering the members were once part of the culture – v. 11-“such were some of you”). So Paul must address it.

b. *The body is not for fornication.* This is the individual, physical body, not the church (v. 15). Contrary to religious ideas in Corinth, the gods didn't create you for these sexual activities! Notice the distinction between meat & fornication. Eating is okay, as long as it's not abused. Fornication is **not** okay! *Your body is for the Lord!* This applies to any way you can use your body in violation to God's purpose: fornication (incl. pornography, lasciviousness in dancing and immodest dress), drinking, smoking, overeating, improper language & joking. All these are improper uses of the body.

c. (v. 14) *God raised up Jesus, & will raise us up.* Ch. 15 tells of a *new* spiritual body. This new body will be in Heaven, devoted to glorifying God. So this is how we should live in *this* body (purely). *Rom 12:13 – *Yield yourselves to God.*

2. The body is a member of Christ (v. 15-18)

a. The argument (v. 15-17). *Don't you know that your bodies* (plural) *are the members of Christ?* You should know this! - The church is the body of Christ (Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18). We are individual members (ch. 12; Rom 12:4-8). *YOUR* body is a member of Christ!

- *Shall I take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot?* To be a part of Christ, and then joined to a prostitute, is like joining *Christ's* body to a prostitute! What a sick, disgusting thought!

- (v. 16-17) *Don't you know...one body?* (Gen 2:24–they shall become one flesh). *One spirit* w/the Lord (unity)!

You're trying to be joined physically with sin and spiritually with Christ. This is impossible (1 Jn 1:5-6)! One must give, and will!

*This applies to **any** sin. Should a member of Christ's body lie, use bad language, or go to bars, etc.? Christ lives in you (Gal 2:20). So when *you* do something, it's as if you are bringing Christ along with you! It is certainly perceived so by the world!

b. The action (v. 18). *Flee* (run away, escape) *fornication!* This sin is against your own body! Gen 39 – Joseph is such a good example. Just run away! Get away from the temptation! Don't even stop to think about what might happen!

3. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (v. 19-20)

a. (v. 19) *Don't you know that your* (plural) *body* (singular – the church – 3:16) *is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?* The Holy Spirit is in us (this doesn't say how, just that He is; by other passages we know it is **not** miraculous).

**Don't you know that you are not your own?* Freedom in Christ is not absolute freedom! It's freedom to serve God and others (1 Pet 2:16-17). It's freedom from the slavery of sin, and the death that comes along with sin.

b. (v. 20) *You are bought with a price!* Christ's death (His blood) purchased the church (Ac 20:28). We are very valuable to God. *So glorify God in your* (plural) *body* (sing. –church). This is the message of chapters 5 & 6:

- We've already seen that this applies to each of us individually (v. 15-18) – Flee fornication; control yourself!

- Now we see that this applies to the church as a whole. Flee fornication (remove it from among you). If an individual member won't control his body, then the church must make sure to maintain its control of *the* body (church)!

CONCLUSION: The message is to flee sin, and to glorify God in your body. The specific context has been the fornicating brother (he needs to repent or be disfellowshipped). The greater context is the church in general. Don't judge these sins as acceptable just because the world around you does. The message is the same to us. All over the NT we see that the message of Christianity is that of a complete change. It doesn't matter what sins you were involved with before. Now your life has changed. Now your goal is to glorify God in your body (your life), completely – whatever it takes! Is this our aim today?